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ABSTRACT

Designed to improve self esteem and quality of life for rural adolescents and elderly, Project Teen-Ager enables these groups to exchange knowledge and skills for their mutual benefit. Initial sponsors of the program were Manning High School and South Carolina Community Long Term Care, a state agency for elderly/disabled persons who need help to remain at home. From a student body of 900, 60 students (45 females and 15 males, ages 14-18) volunteered for the project and completed a training program which introduced them to the needs and characteristics of the elderly. Fifteen elderly (13 males and 2 females, ages 57-98) agreed to participate. Needs and skills of students and the elderly were inventoried and used to form complementary teams consisting of four students and one elderly person. In the first 3 months of the project (March-June 1984) students spent a total of 150 hours with their elderly partners--an average of 1 hour per older person per week. Their activities included gardening, housekeeping, cooking, helping with school homework, transporting, talking, and listening. Judging by the active support of community agencies and the positive responses of adolescent and elderly participants, the continuation of Project Teen-Ager seems assured. (JHZ)

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PROJECT TEEN-AGER - A SKILLS EXCHANGE PROGRAM: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS VOLUNTEERING WITH THE ELDERLY IN A RURAL COMMUNITY

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Presented At:
National/International Institute On Social Work In Rural Areas
University Of Maine At Orono
July, 1984

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PROJECT TEEN-AGER - A SKILLS EXCHANGE PROGRAM:
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS VOLUNTEERING WITH THE ELDERLY IN A RURAL COMMUNITY

> "Never before in history have we had so many "senior citizens"... This increase in the lifespan and in the number of our senior citizens presents this Nation with increased opportunities: the opportunity to draw upon their skill and sagacity and the opportunity to provide the respect and recognition they have earned. It is not enough for a great nation merely to have added new years to life-our objective must also be to add life to those years."
>
> President John F. Kennedy
> Address to the Congress
> February 21, 1963

One of the unmet needs of rural adolescents and the rural elderly is the opportunity to make a contribution to society and have a true sense of accomplishment, sharing, and responsibility. When it comes to making contributions, our society has turned away from adolescents and the elderly: one group because they have contributed in the past, and the other group because they will contribute in the future. Both groups want to contribute now, in the present. Because of ageism, both with adolescents and elderly, this opportunity is not often available. Project Teen-Ager is a volunteer program (sponsored by South Carolina Community Long Term Care and Manning (SC) High School) to enable high school students and elderly to combine their talents, learn from each other and attain self esteem. Project Teen-Ager is a program of skills/knowledge sharing and networking in a rural community (Manning, SC) to improve the quality of life for both high school students and elderly.

Project Teen-Ager goals are to increase the independence, self esteem, responsibilities, socialization, and self worth of rural elderly and adolescents. Two other objectives of Project Teen-Ager are: to educate high school students to the value of the elderly, and provide "future career" experience for the students (ie: social work, medicine).

Rural adolescents and elderly both want the chance for responsibility and the opportunity to help. Many of the rural elderly are isolated, lack interaction and stimulation; as well as the opportunity to share their skills and knowledge with others. Adolescents and elderly can both benefit from a mutual helping and sharing relationship.

Project Teen-Ager mutual benefits are: skill sharing, help-mate, student school work assistance, grocery shopping, friendly visitor/ telephone companion, transportation, housekeeping, foster grandparents, career development, and decrease elderly health care problems. Another objective of Project Teen-Ager was to continue the link between a rural community's past, present, and future through the development of a sense of "historical linkage" between the students and the elderly.

Project Teen-Ager was developed as an outreach-community resource development service by South Carolina Community Long Term Care Program of Sumter, SC. Community Long Term Care is a publicly funded program offering services to elderly or disabled persons who need help to remain at home and avoid unnecessary or premature nursing home care. In addition, Community Long Term Care provides planning and coordination of services to elderly and disabled persons and their families through a program of comprehensive assessment, level of care determination, coordination, monitoring, and reassessment of the person's health and social service needs. Because Community Long Term Care is a state agency, all volunteers are covered by the state insurance program.

Manning, South Carolina is a rural community (population: 9,890) in rural Clarendon County (population: 27,464). The student population of Manning High School is 900. Manning High School is part of Clarendon School District Two, not Clarendon School District One (which has recently received adverse publicity regarding student education).

When the development of Project Teen-Ager was first discussed with various social services agencies in the community , all were in favor; especially the Clarendon County Council on Aging. There was also much skepticism as well as enthusiasm. I was told, "Adolescents don't want responsibility and can't handle it". Another person said, "If you get this program going, you should be voted 'Man of the Year'."

All the community agencies (Council on Aging, local hospital, Social Services, Mental Health, and Home Health) made referrals to Project Teen-Ager (November, 1983). There were only two criteria for acceptance of a referral of an elderly person for Project Teen-Ager; they had to be mentally healthy and not terminally ill. We did not want to set up either the elderly person or the high school students for a "potentially failure" experience. Fortunately, one of the biggest boosters of Project Teen-Ager was the hospital social worker (who was also a member of the Board of Education). She arranged a planning session between the Community Long Term Care social worker and the school district superintendent (and put in a good word for Project Teen-Ager, too). At this December, 1983 meeting the superintendent was very enthusiastic about Project Teen-Ager (Appendix 1)and recommended/ referred Project Teen-Ager to the Manning High School principal. A subsequent meeting took place with the principal, Community Long Term Care social worker, and Community Long Term Care area administrator. The principal gave his unqualified support, and it was decided that the social worker would present Project Teen-Ager to the student council for their input and feedback.

At the January, 1984 student council meeting Project Teen-Ager was presented and strongly approved and recommended. The student council then "spread the word" about Project Teen-Ager back to the other students. There were 75 interested students at the first meeting.

It was decided at this meeting that there would be four training sessions during February for the purpose of training the students in the skills and needs of the elderly, and to find out what the students wanted to get out of their Project Teen-Ager experience. It was also decided that Project Teen-Ager would begin in March, 1984. The principal reserved a room for the training, and an extended lunch hour was developed for the four week/one-hour-a-week training.

Simultaneously, while the training was starting, the Community Long Term Care social worker and nurse were interviewing the elderly referrals. Out of a pool of thirty, fifteen agreed to participate. A needs/skills assessment form (Appendix 2) was used during the interview (this form was also used with the students) to match the elderly person with the high school students who best fit their needs, skills, and geographic location. The final fifteen Project Teen-Ager elderly team members were almost all shut-ins and single; with a variety of health care problems: diabetes, amputees, lonely, fear of people. There were thirteen females and two males. The age range was 57-98. The elderly were racially intergrated, as were the high school students. It was decided that the ratio of students to the elderly would be 4:1. This ratio allowed the students to car pool, mutually support each other, help and learn at the older person's home; and if one student dropped out of Project Teen-Ager, the elderly team member would not be without a partner.

The training model that was developed for the student training sessions was a model of moving from the general to the specific. The first two training hours consisted of health/social needs and skills of the elderly, and the impact of the aging process. The third hour was used for utilizing community resources. The fourth hour was a pairing of the students with their elderly buddy/partner and talking about specific skills, needs, and concerns of each team.

The first two training sessions were conducted by the nurse and social worker. These sessions dealt with the aging process, the skills, experiences, and health/social problems of the elderly. Some of the topics covered were: sensory deprivation, loss of loved ones, loss of freedom and self esteem, income changes, contributions of the elderly. Lecture, group discussion, and experiential learning was utilized. Some examples of the experiental learning were: hearing loss/cotton in ears, stroke/opposite hand basket shooting, sight loss/sunglasses, mobility problems/staying in chair or hopping, diet/ salt and cookies, memory loss/Pocket Simon™. We made the training interesting and fun. If a volunteer could throw a piece of paper in a basket with their "opposite hand" (stroke) they won a Kennedy half dollar; if they could do the forty sequence Pocket Simon (memory) they won a Jefferson two dollar; and if they could answer the Oedipus Rex riddle (aging process) they won a Susan B. Anthony dollar. I also told the students what I was told concerning their lack of interest and responsibility, and how I did not believe it. Now, they were going to show all the people that they wanted to help, and that adolescents were not irresponsible people.

The last half of the second training session dealt with student expectations, wants, needs, and goals for Project Teen-Ager. They discussed their own strengths, problems, and what concerns and successes they foresaw with their elderly partners. When I asked the students who would get the most out of Project Teen-Ager they all said they would because now they would have some new friends they could help. Some of them said, "Helping someone makes me feel better." Also, "I want to be with an older person so I can learn from them and maybe they can learn from me." And finally, "When I become old and maybe helpless, I would want someone to help me."

The third training session dealt with the use of community resources and agencies; and what services were available in Clarendon County (meals on wheels, home health nursing, congregrate meals, food stamps, homemakers, protective services). This presentation was made by the Clarendon County Council on Aging Director (Appendix 3A,B,&C).

The fourth training session was used for pairing the students with each other and their older partner (Appendix 4) according to interests, needs, skills, friendships, and transportation. It was stressed to the students that what they did with their older partner was up to their team. That anything that they and their older partner wanted was all right(freedom of choice). Also, one of the trainers in the last session was a young Manning resident (in her early 20's) who had particpated in a similar program in Philadelphia and was able to share some of her experiences with the students.

There were 60 students who finished the training and participated in Project Teen-Ager. There were 45 females and 15 males. The age range of the students was 14-18. Freshmen-Seniors were represented. The student teams were both sexually and racially integrated.

Some of the skills expressed by the elderly during their assessment interviews were helping with student homework, gardening, sewing, being a good listener and friend, and telling the students about the "old days" in Manning. Some of the needs were transportation, housecleaning, and friendships. During the training the students said they wanted from their older partners: someone who would listen to them, help with homework, someone they could help, and just be there when they needed them. Most of the students wanted grandparents. One parent of one of the students came to a Project Teen-Ager training session and told me that her daughter never knew her grandparents and Project Teen-Ager was a wonderful opportunity to finally develop a relationship with a "grandparent".

As planned, the Project Teen-Ager training was completed in February, and the program began in March, 1984. During the first three months of the program: March-June (while school was in session) the students were with their elderly partners for a total of 150 hours (an average of one hour per older person for each week). The students and their elderly partners engaged in a variety of activities: yard work, housekeeping, cooking, school homework, friendships, spending the night, transportation, grandparenting, transportation, learning, sharing, and most important, the feeling of being needed.

During the first six weeks that Project Teen-Ager was operational the students met biweekly with the social worker to discuss their experiences, share with each other, and get feedback (Appendix 5). In addition, the Manning High School principal continued his support by not only giving a room and time for the Project Teen-Ager monitoring, but he also provided Project Teen-Ager with a mailbox for the students to drop off their activity sheets. At the same time the social worker was keeping in weekly contact with the elderly Project Teen-Ager participants to find out what they were doing with their younger team member, and if they felt that Project Teen-Ager was a positive experience for them.

The response by both the high school students and the elderly to Project Teen-Ager was extremely positive. Not only were both the students and elderly accomplishing together, and helping each other, they were also making a contribution and felt needed (which they were). The elderly now had someone they could still help and teach, and new friends to help them with their lives and health care. The students now had someone that they could help, and who would listen to them. All of Project Teen-Ager participants had feelings of accomplishment, self esteem, and increased self worth. Project Teen-Ager was a success.

The community social services agencies and their staffs were also very pleased with Project Teen-Ager, and impressed with how the high school students assisted their partners (agency clients). The community social service agencies were getting some needed assistance form the student volunteers; and in these days of reduced funding and services, everyone helping is considered a bonus.

After six weeks (April, 1984) Project Teen-Ager's administration and monitoring was transferred from Community Long Term Care to the Clarendon County Council on Aging. It was always the intention of the Project Teen-Ager developers to have a community agency take over Project Teen-Ager (so that it was truly a community resource), but the transition happened faster than anticipated. The reason that the transition took place in April rather than at the end of the summer (before the new school term) was because there was some concern by Community Long Term Care as to the use of the social worker's time/ salary for the continuing monitoring and administering Project Teen-Ager. The funding problems did not effect the development or implementation of Project Teen-Ager, but only with the program's maintenance management. Fortunately, the Clarendon County Council on Aging Director was very pleased to take over Project Teen-Ager's monitoring, and a very smooth and effective continuity of service monitoring took place.

The Clarendon County Council on Aging continues to administer and monitor. Various community agencies continue to make referrals for Project Teen-Ager. The Clarendon County Council on Aging has encouraged the high school students to continue their relationships with their older partners during the summer (which the students have been doing).

After the Clarendon County Council on Aging took over Project Teen-Ager, it has been proposed by the local Council For Governments (Santee-Lynches) that Project Teen-Ager be developed and utilized at various high schools and Councils on Aging in the region (Kershaw, Lee, Clarendon, and Sumter Counties). Project Teen-Ager has been working so well that another agency wanted to use it, and spread its effectiveness throughout South Carolina.

The Community Long Term Care social worker realized that once Project Teen-Ager was developed and in place that it would be a self sustaining program, no matter which community agency administered the program. Project Teen-Ager would continue because the friendships, bonding, and linkages between the adolescents and the elderly would have already been developed. A new community natural helping network had been developed and nurtured by two community agencies (Manning High School and Community Long Term Care). This natural helping network in a rural community continues on its own and is flourishing because of the adolescents and elderly, and the continued support Project Teen-Ager receives from community agencies and the families of the high school students and elderly.

"I am here because I want to learn about the past and use it in the future"

Rethel Gill
Manning (SC) High School Student
February, 1984

SOUTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY LONG TERM CARE
State Office
South Carolina Department of Social Services
Post Office Box 1520
Columbia, South Carolina 29202-9988
(803) 758-2731

Long Term Care
Policy Council

William S. Hall, M.D., Chairman
Commissioner, S.C. Department of Mental Health

Harry R. Bryan
Director, S.C. Commission on Aging

Robert S. Jackson, M.D.
Commissioner, S.C. Department of Health & Environmental Control

Charles D. Barnett, Ph.D.
Commissioner, S.C. Department of Mental Retardation

John A. Crosscope, Jr.
Interim Commissioner, S.C. Department of Social Services

Mrs. Sarah Shuptrine
Director, Division of Health & Human Services
Governor's Office

Mr. Thomas E. Brown, Jr.
Director

PROJECT TEEN-AGER

(1) Background Information:

Need: Many of the elderly are isolated, lack interaction and stimulation, as well as lacking the opportunity to share their knowledge with others. Many high school students would benefit from a mutually helping relationship between themselves and the elderly.

Major Program Emphasis: Foster Grandparent Program, Friendly Visitor/Telephone Mate, Grocery Shopping, Housekeeping, Skills Sharing.

(2) Project Goals: To increase the independence, mobility, socialization, self esteem, and the self worth of the elderly of Clarendon County. To increase the quality of life for all the people in Clarendon County. To prevent unnecessary health care problems of the elderly. To educate students to the value of the elderly.

(3) Procedure Methods: Presentation of project goals at high schools and interviews at student service clubs and classes. Group students into a "buddy system" so that each student group is assigned one elderly person to work with and to help them with their identified needs. Training: training the student groups in working with the elderly, volunteerism, gerontology, and responding to the needs of the elderly.

(4) Coordination: Weekly contact reports (CLTC Narrative Form) by the students as to their activities with the elderly. Bi-weekly contacts with the elderly regarding service satisfaction. Monthly meetings with the volunteers regarding program concerns.

(5) Organizational Structure: Each student group will choose an elderly person to assist (with the consent of that elderly person). The student groups will interact with the Project Coordinator on a weekly basis (see Coordination) and the Project Coordinator will supervise the project.

(6) Evaluation: A form will be developed for the purposes of monthly review, assessment, and evaluation.

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APPENDIX 2

PROJECT TEEN-AGER

NAME: _____ AGE: _____

ADDRESS: _____ TELEPHONE: _____

_____ SEX: FEMALE ___ MALE ___

INTERESTS: _____

_____

SKILLS: _____

_____

NEEDS: _____

DAYS AND TIMES AVAILABLE: _____

CAN YOU USE A CAR? YES: _____ NO: _____

HISTORY
OF
CLARENDON COUNTY COUNCIL ON AGING

Clarendon County Council on Aging, Inc. was organized December 14, 1972. It was funded by the Older Americans Act, in July 1, 1973, and supported by Clarendon County.

The Older Americans Act is the basis upon which local programs for older persons are built. The Administration on Aging in Washington authorizes the designation of State Agencies on Aging by Governors and provides for the allocation of Federal Funds to States on a formula grant basis under an approved State Plan on Aging.

The Commission on Aging in Columbia is responsible for providing technical assistance, training, and monitoring for effectiveness. They allocate the Federal and State Funds to the County Councils on Aging.

The County Council on Aging is the service provider. Priority is given to frail elderly with the greatest economic or social needs.

Our purpose is to assist those over 60 years of age to gain access to service to meet basic needs to enable them to remain at home near family and friends to assure a feeling of security and happiness in familiar surroundings, and to remain in the mainstream of society and feel needed.

Services include:

Information & Referral (to proper source)
Social Security Assistance
Legal Assistance
Financial Problems
Advocacy on Behalf of the Elderly
Medical Problems
Job Problems
Recreation Needs
Nutrition Needs
Telephone Reassurance
Visitation
Food Stamp Assistance

Outreach

Employees and Volunteers are searching Clarendon County for persons over 60 years of age with needs, referring them to the proper places.

Transportation

Demand response, by appointment, in advance if possible. Set routes to meal sites and recreation. Sightseeing and other outings, also Escort Services.

Home Delivered Meals

A nutritious hot meal is delivered to home bounds Monday through Friday at noon.

Congregate Meals

Serving nutritious meals in a congregate setting. Emphasis placed on serving older persons with the greatest economic and social needs. Providing recreation and support services at all times.

Homemaker Services

To render homemaker service to the frail elderly such as cleaning and defrosting the refrigerator, cleaning the range, sweeping, dusting, mopping, changing bed linens, light laundry, ironing and mending also preparing a meal when needed.

Residential Repair

To do minor repairs to the homes of the frail elderly, to make them more comfortable and feel safer in their homes. This includes repairing steps, porches, doors, windows, hand rails, weatherization and trimming bushes around the house.

APPENDIX 3A

We are funded by Federal, State, County, United Way, contributions, memberships and activity projects. The County furnishes a building in Manning, The Town of Summerton furnishe a lot for a building in Summerton purchased with Housing Urban Development (HUD) money.

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The Department of Social Services can arrange for other necessary social services, if available, for adult clients, such as:

(1) Home Delivered and Congregate Meals

(2) Transportation

(3) Adult Day Care

(4) Special Services for Handicapped and Disabled Adults

(5) Social Support for Adults

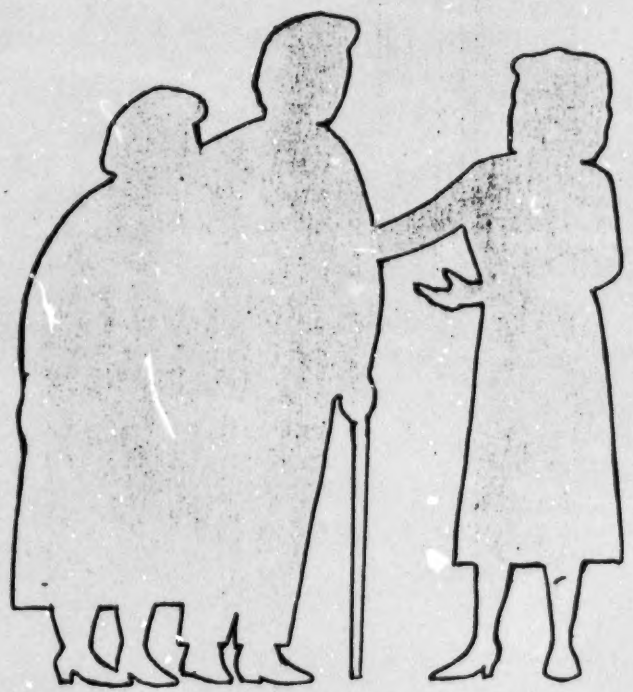
(6) Community Based Counseling

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT THE ADULT SERVICES UNIT AT YOUR COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICE

In accordance with Title VI Section 601 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title V Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the State Department of Social Services will administer its programs in such a manner that no person shall solely by reason of his race, color, national origin or qualified handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity administered by the Department.

DSS Brochure No. 2421
(January, 1984)

Adult Services



APPENDIX 3B

SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Some adults, due to aging, health problems or disabilities, may need Social Services to help them meet their basic needs or to overcome problems affecting their day to day activities . . . . . .

PROBLEMS	SERVICES TO ADULTS PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Mr. Smith, 29, a mentally retarded adult is without money because his "friend" took his disability check. How can he be protected from exploitation?	→ PROTECTIVE SERVICES FOR ADULTS
Miss Price can no longer live alone. She wanders at night and forgets to eat during the day. How can she receive daily care and supervision?.	→ ALTERNATE PLACEMENT AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES
Mrs. Jones was told by her doctor to stay in bed for several days. She lives alone. How can her personal needs be met?	→ HOMEMAKER SERVICES
Mr. Taylor cannot read so he threw away his notice of appointment for his SSI benefits reinstatement. He needs Food Stamps but doesn't know how to get them. How can he be helped in utilizing needed resources?	→ FAMILY MANAGEMENT COUNSELING SERVICES

APPENDIX 4

SOUTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY LONG TERM CARE

Area Seven Office
105 North Magnolia Street
Post Office Box 1628
Sumter, South Carolina 29105
(803) 778-5413
Serving Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee and Sumter

Long Term Care
Policy Council

William S. Hall, M.D.
Commissioner, S.C. Department of Mental Health

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John A. Crosscope, Jr.
Interim Commissioner, S.C. Department of Social Services

Sarah C. Shuptrine
Director, Division of Health & Human Services Governor's Office

Thomas E. Brown, Jr.
Director

February 27, 1984

Dear Telephone:_____

The following Manning High School students will be contacting you for their volunteer experience. They are looking forward to working and sharing with you.

_____ _____

_____ _____

Sincerely yours,

Judson H. Morris

Judson H. Morris, Jr., MSW

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APPENDIX 5

PROJECT TEEN-AGER

High School Student's Names: _____

Experienced Person's Name: _____

Type of Activities: _____

_____

Hours of Activity: _____

Date of Activities: _____

What Happenned? _____

_____

PROJECT TEEN-AGER

High School Student's Names: _____

Experienced Person's Name: _____

Type of Activities: _____

_____

Hours of Activity: _____

Date of Activities: _____

What Happenned? _____

_____

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